

# Beware of Serotonin Syndrome

def. Rare but serious drug reaction due to too much of the chemical serotonin in your brain

## Know your drugs

Ask your pharmacist about medicines that increase serotonin



**Antidepressants**  
MAOI's are the highest risk serotonin medicines



**Cough and cold**  
Cough & cold medicines with dextromethorphan or "DM"



**Street drugs**  
E.g., ecstasy (MDMA), amphetamine, cocaine



**Opioids and Pain Meds**  
E.g., tramadol, demerol, methadone, fentanyl



**Natural drugs**  
E.g., St. John's wort, tryptophan, diet pills



**Parkinson's disease**  
E.g., selegiline, rasagiline

## When to watch

Symptoms start within hours to 1 day of:



Upping a dose



Starting a new medicine



Taking a street drug

## What to watch for

Serotonin syndrome can look like other things – ask your doctor

### Mild

Feeling nervous, difficulty sleeping  
Shaking hands or feet  
Nausea, diarrhea  
Big pupils

### Moderate

Side-to-side eye movements  
Feeling restless, irritated  
Muscle jerks  
Sweating

### Severe

Fever  $>38.5^{\circ}\text{C}/101.3^{\circ}\text{F}$   
Confusion  
Coma  
Death

## What to do

Do you have **mild** symptoms? What about **moderate** or **severe** symptoms?



Call your doctor or pharmacist



Go to the emergency room



Call 911

## Prevent it

If on a serotonin drug, ask your **prescriber AND pharmacist** before:

- ✓ Starting a new medicine
- ✓ Taking street drugs
- ✓ Switching to a similar medicine
- ✓ Increasing the dose
- ✓ Taking natural medicines
- ✓ Taking cough and cold medicine

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